

SITUATION REPORT NO. 8
INCIDENT NO. 2004-021
DATE: April 20, 2004 Time: 5:00 p.m.

TO: Governor John Hoeven
State Capitol
Bismarck ND 58505

1. **NATURE OF DISASTER:** **Spring Flooding** induced by heavy rains on frozen ground and ice-packed drains, streams and rivers.
2. **DEATHS AND INJURIES:** No deaths or injuries have been reported.
3. **DAMAGES:** A Federal/State/Local Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) completed on April 16, 2004, identified \$3,797,850 in public assistance damages. The PDA indicated the most severe impacts were to utility and transportation infrastructure. Agricultural interests, personal property, and public health and safety were also impacted by the event.

While floodwaters have receded in most areas, the full extent of the rainfall's impact in the Devils Lake Basin won't be known until later. This closed-basin lake has experienced disastrous flooding since 1993, reaching a historic record of 1,448.04 feet on August 9, 2001. The basin was already full and snow covered at the onset of this winter, before the rainfall event occurred. National Weather Service (NWS) forecasters anticipate March's heavy rainfall will cause the lake to exceed its record level. Within a few days of the rainfall, lake levels rose about one-half foot, from approximately 1,446.5 feet to 1,447.0 feet. Forecasts call for the lake to reach a level of 1,448.5 feet by late April or early May. There is still a risk of the lake rising to level of 1,449 feet or higher. The NWS plans to update its forecast now that most of the runoff has entered the drainage system. This will allow the NWS to get a better picture. Rule of thumb damage costs during the modern day lake rise, which began in 1993, have equated to approximately \$30 million per foot. As the event continues to unfold, its major impact will affect a three-county area, Benson, Nelson and Ramsey, as well as the Spirit Lake Nation. Damage to infrastructure and property within the basin will continue to mount over the next several weeks as floodwaters make their way to Devils Lake. The additional water will flow into nearby Stump Lake will undoubtedly rise to record levels, inundating additional property and damaging infrastructure between the two lakes.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: The United Methodist Disaster Response Group (UMCOR) provided 90 flood buckets to impacted residents for cleaning and sanitizing flooded basements. Teams from Baptist and Lutheran churches also responded and provided volunteer services in the form of cleaning and sanitizing. The Jewish Disaster Response Group (Nechama) and the Mennonite Disaster Response also provided services in the area.

The Salvation Army provided 675 meals and snacks for volunteers in the area along with 220 clean-up kits. The American Red Cross (ARC) provided 2,829 meals and snacks to volunteers. The ARC also provided 400 clean-up kits for volunteers and impacted home owners. In total, the N.D. Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) contributed 3,504 meals and snacks and 710 cleanup kits.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: Governor John Hoeven today asked President Bush to issue a Presidential Disaster Declaration for flooding that began on March 26 in 10 North Dakota counties and one Indian reservation. The Governor's request follows completion of a preliminary damage assessment (PDA) by federal, state, local and tribal officials, which is prerequisite to the presidential request. Counties and tribal lands included in the Governor's Presidential Disaster Request are: Benson, Cavalier, Grand Forks, Griggs, Nelson, Pembina, Ramsey, Steele, Traill, Walsh and the Spirit Lake Nation. If the President declares the area a disaster, local governments could receive federal grants to cover 75 percent of the public property damages. State and local governments must absorb the remaining 25 percent. If approved by the President, the disaster declaration will open access to the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant and Public Assistance programs and may help access Federal Highway Assistance funds. Officials will continue to assess losses and explore all avenues for assistance. Hoeven expects a decision on the request by about mid-May.

On April 20, 2004, Governor Hoeven upgraded his emergency flood declaration to a disaster declaration for northeastern North Dakota counties and the Spirit Lake Nation.

Governor Hoeven has also pressed Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials for Individual Assistance programs, but the agency determined that damages from this year's event do not qualify. Consequently, the Governor directed Division of Emergency Management Director Doug Friez to identify sources of state and local assistance for residents. The N.D. Department of Commerce, Division of Community Services (DCS), the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Health all have programs that may be of assistance. In addition, Governor Hoeven asked the Division of Community Services to prioritize their housing programs to address unmet needs, including damage to electric panels, wiring and other essential items. The N.D. VOAD can also provide aid.

Officials from the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) have given the impacted counties until April 26 to compile and submit estimates of federal highway damages in their respective areas. The FHA will then evaluate the county submittals for a possible emergency declaration.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No changes from previous reports.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No changes from previous reports.
9. OTHER INFORMATION: The N.D. Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

Douglas C. Friez, State Director